

## A Challenge to David Irving

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At the time of the fifth international Revisionist Conference sponsored by the Institute for Historical Review, held in Los Angeles on 3-5 September 1983, I had the pleasure of meeting David Irving for the first time. Unfortunately, our meeting was too short. We had a brief conversation, and then I listened to his presentation. At the conclusion of his presentation, some of us were able to ask him questions or share with him our comments. There again the time was too short for me to bring up to him all that was on my mind. On the following day, before beginning my own paper, I briefly shared with the audience the questions and comments that I would have directed to David Irving. I expand upon them here. It will come as no surprise that they concern what is called the problem of genocide and the gas chambers.

### Karl Wolff's 'Seventy Men'

In my brief conversation with him, I asked Irving who the approximately "seventy men" were who, in his opinion, knew about the existence of the extermination camps. I reminded him of the following passage from his *Hitler's War*:

By August 1942 the massacre machinery was gathering momentum -- of such refinement and devilish ingenuity that from Himmler down to the ex-lawyers who ran the extermination camps perhaps only seventy men were aware of the truth. (*Hitler's War* [New York: Viking Press, 1977], p. 393.)

Irving told me that it was General Karl Wolff, former SS-Obergruppenführer, who had mentioned that figure of approximately seventy men. Wolff had mentioned that figure in a study that can be found today at the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte in Munich. I then asked Irving if there wasn't something strange about that. In point of fact, Karl Wolff, Himmler's Chief of Staff and liaison officer with Hitler, had never, during the entire length of the war, been informed of any such extermination program. It was only in April 1945 that he had heard it mentioned in Switzerland, over the radio, at the time of his negotiations over the surrender of the German troops in Italy. Irving stated his agreement with me on this point. Then our conversation was interrupted. I would like further to have asked him the following questions:

- 1.) Karl Wolff, according to David Irving, made a very serious accusation against some seventy persons. One-by-one: who are those seventy-some persons "down to the ex-lawyers"? Did Karl Wolff undertake an investigation regarding each case? Did he even so much as inquire in any sense? When and how? Had he detailed evidence to support his accusations? If so, what is it? Can we verify that evidence?
- 2.) Has David Irving examined that evidence, if it exists, and has he found it convincing? Why has the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte in Munich not published it? Are David Irving and Martin Broszat, the director of the Institut, prepared today to publish the documents it has relating to this, which must have been compiled prior to 1977 (the date of publication of Irving's book)?
- 3.) In order to understand Irving's remarks about "such refinement and devilish ingenuity," I need concrete details of all kinds. I want to know first what that "refinement" consisted of, as well as that "ingenuity" (a "devilish" ingenuity at that). I want to know about the material reality which must lie behind those words. What was the nature of those realities? What were their dimensions? Where were they located? How did they function? Who conceived of them? Who drew up the plans? Who had them carried out? With what manpower and materials? Most of all, with what kind of budget? How did they succeed in hiding the creation and operation of such machinery from Hitler and from the entire world for a period of three or four years? How is it that, except for perhaps seventy men, all of the personnel of the military, police, and economic organizations could not see that millions of people were disappearing in that way into horrible slaughterhouses whose operation must have demanded considerable supplies of raw materials (hard to obtain in a time of total war) and a no less considerable labor force (at a time when it was precisely the lack of manpower that was causing such terrible problems for Germany)?

### Some Seventy Supermen!

Borrowing a comparison from David Irving, I can certainly believe that Menachem Begin could have been unaware of the massacre at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Lebanon at the time it was taking place. Over a period of several hours several hundred civilians were massacred. I do not know when Begin learned of the massacre, but I do know that, like everyone else in the world, he learned about it very quickly. If, however, instead of several hundred men, women, and children being massacred in a few hours, we were considering the massacre of millions of men, women, and children over a period of three or four years in the very heart of Europe, by what miracle could that heinous crime have been hidden from Hitler, Stalin, Churchill, Roosevelt, as well as Germany and all of Europe, except for perhaps only seventy men? Those seventy-some men must have been supermen. For myself, a person who has studied the problem so much, I further state that those supermen, not content with clandestinely carrying out such a fantastic massacre, succeeded also in wiping out all traces of their heinous crime. Because there does not exist, for example, any proof of the existence of a single homicidal gas chamber which could have been built and used by the Germans. What does exist is a superabundance of alleged evidence which, when

subjected to the elementary and routine methods of historical research, is demonstrated to be false. We have thousands of solid proofs of the existence in certain German camps of shower facilities, disinfection facilities, facilities for preserving bodies in mortuaries before burning them in crematory ovens; we know when, where, by whom, according to what plans, and with how much money all that was done. But about the gigantic homicidal gas chambers, we have nothing. That is magic.

## David Irving: Only "Some Feelings" About the Extermination Story

Now I come to David Irving's presentation at the Revisionist Conference. The impression of magic persists there again. Irving has the honesty to advise us that, in fact, he has not studied the particular aspect of the history of the Second World War that some call the "Holocaust." With some insistence he repeated that about the "Holocaust" specifically he only has some "feelings." He said that in his mind there has been formed a certain impression of what "probably" took place. He does not for a moment attack the revisionist authors. He does not act like those persons who issue denunciations of the revisionists that are more and more categorical in proportion to the extent that they have not studied the question. However, even a David Irving sometimes gives in to the temptation to maintain opinions that, from his own point of view, he ought not to maintain since he has not studied the question. The errors that he makes here and there prove by themselves that he is a layman on this subject.

According to the manuscript transcription of his presentation taken from the tape recording, David Irving uses the following words (p. 42):

... my suggestion that, if there was any kind of liquidation program going on, then Hitler did not know about it.

Setting aside for the moment the question of Hitler himself, let us deal only with the question whether or not, according to Irving, there was a program for the physical liquidation of the Jews. The words that I have just quoted show me a David Irving who answers my questions neither with a yes nor a no. However, by this very fact alone he takes, in my opinion, a courageous position, which must prompt his readers to some reflection since here Irving does not place himself among those who assume the extermination as an established fact. He speaks about it in the conditional mood ("if"). That skepticism or that refusal to commit himself is encountered elsewhere on the same subject in his same presentation. Here are some quotations in which I have added emphasis to certain words.

(p. 42): Hitler was completely in the dark about anything that may have been going on. **And I use these words very closely.**

(p. 53): ... whatever happened at the other end [of this transport movement] **if anything happened at the other end...**

(p. 57): ... what crimes may or **may not** have been going on...

On several occasions David Irving, instead of talking with the degree of certainty that one can obtain from an investigation, prefers to talk about a "feeling" or about "feelings" that one can simply have in "mind":

(p. 42): I would say I am satisfied in my own mind... I am quite plain about that in my own mind... I've got the kind of gut feeling which suggests to me that that is probably accurate.

(p. 49): And there's no question in my mind that... in my view...

(p. 50): Now, this fits in with the image that I have built in my own mind that...

I am now going to reproduce in its entirety a passage in which Irving tried to define his position. I emphasize the words in it which seem to me especially worthy of note -- either because they frankly show the lack of certainty of the author, or because they call for explanations that are not forthcoming; from this comes the general impression that David Irving is making some accusations which are very serious, and yet about which he himself is not entirely sure, at least at this time. He says, as a matter of fact:

(p. 42): I would say I am satisfied in my own mind that in **various locations** [?], **Nazi criminals** [?] acting probably [?] without direct [?] **orders from above**, did carry out liquidations of groups [?] of people including Jews, gypsies, homosexuals, mentally incurable people and the rest. I am quite plain about that in my own mind. I can't prove it, I haven't got into that, I haven't investigated that particular aspect of history but from the documents I've seen, I've got **the kind of gut feeling** which suggests to me that that is probably accurate.

We would love to learn from Irving the facts about precisely how many such "locations" there were and at what geographical points? How many "Nazi criminals" in this matter were there, and what were the specific responsibilities of each? If they acted "probably without direct orders from above," does that mean that they perhaps acted with indirect orders or perhaps even without orders at all? What does "from above" mean? About which level(s) of the hierarchy is Irving thinking here, if he is not alluding to Adolf Hitler alone? What were the processes of physical liquidation that were used? How large were those groups of victims? If, on the one hand, Irving has the honesty -- rare among historians -- to tell us: "I can't prove it, I haven't got into that, I haven't investigated that particular aspect of history" and if, on the other hand, he mentions "the documents I have seen," I can allow myself to deduce the following: David Irving has studied some documents which are not the ones that he would have studied if his research had dealt with the exterminations. In that case, not having carried out research on that aspect, he is not able to say very much about it. He can simply express his "feelings." When he declared to his audience at the Revisionist Conference:

(p. 42): ... I am sure you realize that I take a slightly different line from several people here...

he is certainly correct, considering that the revisionist researchers have carried out their investigations in a specific area which is not Irving's specific area. Logically speaking, if Irving had been invited to a conference of exterminationist believers (that is, those who uphold the standard "Holocaust" story), he would have been obliged to exercise the same care -- the care of the scholarly investigator

who knows that he can talk only about what he thinks he has studied.

Elsewhere in his presentation, Irving takes the risk of giving some details about the history, according to him, of the extermination. It is remarkable that his introductory sentence begins this way:

(p. 48): I can summarize my own feelings, having read all the documentation, quite simply by saying that...

Here the word "documentation" must, according to Irving's own revelations about his research, be taken in the sense of "nonspecific documentation" or "documentation not bearing specifically on the history of the extermination." Since the documentation studied by Irving did not allow him to end up with proof ("I can't prove"), it is understandable that he once more uses the word "feelings."

### **David Irving's Account of the Extermination: Too Much Metaphysics, Not Enough Materialism**

Toward the latter part of his presentation Irving offered his version of the history of the extermination. Here are some extracts from his words (I have removed what seemed to me to be irrelevant commentary or digression, and I have emphasized certain words):

(pp. 48-49): ... whatever happened gained its own momentum deriving from atrocities which the Nazis did commit, for example, the euthanasia program... the killing of the mentally incurable, who occup[ied] the hospital beds that wartime Germany needed -- this was an operation that was carried out on Hitler's written instructions. And this generated a certain amount of expertise in killing, there's no question. And there is no question in my mind that some of the personnel who were operating on that program, the T-4 operation, the "Tiergartenstrasse" (the office from which it was conducted), were then automatically injected into the killing operations that a number of local police officials in my view on the Eastern Front in Germany, carried out against Jews and other people who just got in their way.

What Irving says is in agreement with the exterminationists' narrative. At one end of the chain we have the euthanasia program and, at the other end of the chain, we have a program for the extermination of the Jews and of other categories of possible victims. The object is to demonstrate that there is a sort of logical progression in it. That is hard to believe. To begin with, is a euthanasia program an atrocity or even a crime? I do not believe that one can say that. I notice that today people advocate euthanasia the way others advocate free abortion. The Germans' euthanasia program was back-dated to begin on the very same day (1 September 1939) on which broke out a terrible conflict that was going to cause horrible physical wounds. Therefore, perhaps it was an acute remembrance of the horrible spectacle of certain seriously wounded men from the First World War deprived of hospital beds that caused Hitler and his men to establish the possibility of putting an end to the intolerable or incurable sufferings not only of those who, just for a vegetable existence or worse, were taking up the valuable hospital space, but in some cases of the most severely, hopelessly wounded returning soldiers themselves. In any event, the matter was serious enough for Hitler personally to sign such an order. Certainly no secret about that could be maintained. The churches protested and the program was abandoned under their pressure and that of German public opinion. This is enough to let us say that when there was a decision of that kind to make, Hitler did not leave the responsibility to others, but took it himself. Moreover, he did so in writing -- he signed a document which then served as a point of reference for a mass of orders and measures to be taken as a result. I would add that when decisions were made, after a demanding medical and bureaucratic investigatory process, to put an incurable person out of his misery, the means of death was lethal injection. To convince oneself that there were never any homicidal gas chambers in German hospitals, it is sufficient to refer to the "testimonies" of those who claim that there were such gas chambers in such places. The narratives, uniformly idiotic, can be read, for example, in the recent work by Kogon, Langbein, Rueckerl, et al., *NS-Massentötungen durch Giftgas: eine Dokumentation* (Nazi Mass Killings by Poison Gas: A Documentation [Frankfurt a/M: S. Fischer Verlag, 1983], 350pp.). Besides, can we imagine the bed-ridden, people at death's door, some lacking arms or legs, gathering submissively at the entrance to a room where they would have then been left alone with one wash cloth each and a piece of soap ("Seife und Handtuecher," Kogon, et al., p. 48) -- this room that supposedly had been camouflaged as a shower (no doubt for the benefit of the blind)?

I do not know how the act of administering a euthanasiac injection to such persons could have "generated a certain amount of expertise in killing." I do not see how the existence of an order from Hitler regarding euthanasia would explain the absence of an order from the same Hitler regarding a gigantic undertaking of collective killings. I do not see how Hitler, recoiling before the consequences of his euthanasia order amongst the churches and in German public opinion, could have undertaken a program that would have been outrageously criminal and sure to alienate him from all the churches and all the people on earth, including his own. And, in the case of the Irving thesis (that the immense crime of the "Holocaust" was perpetrated without Hitler knowing about it), I can understand even less how Germans could have been found who would believe themselves to be so many times stronger and more authority-laden than their Führer as to allow them to carry out the following feat: serving their Führer without his knowledge or that of his police, without the knowledge of the public (beginning with those civilians in arms whom we call military men), without the knowledge of their hierarchical superiors as a whole; undertaking the most demented human effort that one could ever have imagined. Where Hitler had given up or feared to tread, these underlings would triumph on all levels? Does David Irving really expect anyone to believe this? Has Irving made an investigation that would allow him to state that "some of the personnel [from the euthanasia operation] were then automatically injected into the killing operations... on the Eastern Front in Germany"? What does "automatically injected" mean? Is there one piece of evidence, one service document, showing that "automatic injection"? What does "some" mean -- does it mean a significant number? What was the wording of the assignment-orders of those persons? To what exact area(s) did each of those persons go on that Eastern Front where nearly all the Germans of an age to serve the German armed forces or the German administration were already going? How would competence in handling a syringe provide competence in the handling of homicidal gas -- a job which, in the United States today, even requires experts who have at their disposal very sophisticated special installations, and must have very special and extensive training, this just in order to kill one single condemned man at a time? Would Irving refer back to Kriminaloberkommissar Christian Wirth and to the confused "confessions" of Kurt Gerstein? He is too wise, I think, to give any credence, even for a minute, to the content of such confessions.

On p. 49, Irving tries to explain to us the end of his sentence thus: "... against the Jews and other people who just got in their [the local police officials'] way." He must sense that this morsel is one of the most difficult to swallow. We were already struggling with vague generalizations in sentences like:

(p. 48): ... whatever happened... gained its own momentum deriving from...

or

(p. 49): ... this generated a certain amount of...

or

(p. 49): ... automatically injected...

In those phrases, I seem to see the God of Spinoza in action. As a matter of fact, the extermination is presented to us as a phenomenon which somehow must result from the natural course of things and must manifest itself one day or another! Here, the act of the Jews and the others meeting their butchers and going to their atrocious deaths seems to be of an immanent character. Let me say in passing -- this does not relate to David Irving -- that I am struck by the hugely-important place occupied in exterminationist literature by things like metaphysics -- the preference, indeed, for the non-material in evidence, for the abstract character of the documentation used, for the stereotyped mythical narrative. Here there seems to exist a holy horror of the exact sciences and what these might tell us.

Why?

## **The Jews Sent to the East**

David Irving says that Berlin sent the Jews to the East without pre-occupying itself too much about their fate. So it was that the Germans who received excessive numbers of them did not know what to do with them. Thus there must have been planted in the minds of certain Germans the idea of undertaking a liquidation of the Jews on a large scale. In support of that thesis, Irving quotes a letter written to Adolf Eichmann on 16 July 1941. The author of that letter wrote that in Posen (Poznan) the German authorities were complaining about the influx of Jews and were asking themselves how to feed them all. The letter in particular is supposed to have contained the following sentences:

(p. 50): We seriously ought to consider whether it is not, whether it would not be the most humane solution, to finish off the Jews, insofar as we can't make use of them as labor, by some kind of fast working method, means which implies some kind of chemical. In any case, it would be far more pleasant than to allow them just to starve to death. [I assume that Irving was here paraphrasing the words of the letter.]

Personally, I cannot make a judgment about that letter until I have re-read it in the German original. I say "re-read" because it seems to me that I have already read it somewhere. Let us suppose that the letter is genuine and that it is correctly translated. (Is the phrase "which implies some kind of chemical" Irving's own interjection within his paraphrase?) Even in that case I see in this letter only the reaction of a man overwhelmed by a serious problem which was already evident in Poland in 1939 and which was going to become the problem of all Europe at war, suffering from a progressive blockade. The author of the letter, and those with him, curse Berlin. As far as they are concerned, Berlin is sending those Jews without bothering about the difficulties in the realms of health, lodging, and feeding which they are going to cause for everyone, beginning with the Jews themselves. It would be more humane to kill those Jews, by whatever means: by means of work which would hasten their deaths, or by some chemical poison. If that consideration proves anything, it proves precisely that such a method apparently did not exist on 16 July 1941, so far as Eichmann's correspondent knew. Did such a method exist later? Ah, well, it is necessary to engage in serious research in order to know that. This could be the point of departure for an historical investigation. It cannot be a stopping-point or a conclusion.

David Irving compares that letter to Eichmann with the word-for-word transcription of a meeting held at the end of 1941 by Hans Frank, Governor General of Poland, a meeting at which one of the chiefs of the local police complained to Berlin in the following terms:

(pp. 50-51): They are sending out trainloads of people to us. Does Berlin imagine that we are housing them in neat housing estates along the Baltic somewhere? We can't do that. We're just bumping them off as and when they arrive. [This is a free rendering by Irving of a portion of Nuremberg document PS-2233, dated 16 December 1941.]

## **The Good Faith of Governor Hans Frank, When Confronted by the Infamous Propaganda**

I hope that Irving will allow me to quote here a passage from the transcripts of the sessions of the International Military Tribunal (IMT) at Nuremberg regarding defendant Hans Frank. To begin with, I will quote Document PS-2233. It consists of excerpts from Hans Frank's official diary as head of the Generalgouvernement of Poland. That diary in its complete version would be 10,000 or 12,000 pages in length. For the Nuremberg tribunal, the excerpts represent only 269 printed pages. You can trust those who chose the excerpts for the IMT; you can trust that they chose everything that could crush Frank. But, in that mountain of various papers, they have not discovered a single page supporting the theory of the extermination and the gas chambers. The page numbered 503 in Vol. XXIX of the blue series (Trial of the Major War Criminals [= IMT]) of Nuremberg documents contains the most violent rhetoric against the Jews. In it are these words:

Wir muessen die Juden vernichten, wo immer wir sie treffen... (We must annihilate the Jews wherever [or -always] we encounter them...)

But, if we put those words back into their context and into the time in which they were spoken (Cracow, 16 December 1941), we see that they are part of that warrior pathos that one encounters among all political men in a country at war. In his own presentation, Irving has shown very well how it is necessary to put the words of Hitler back into their context. The same goes for Hans Frank. And when a political figure sees placed before him such and such a word that he spoke at such a moment of great national or international tension, he can in all justice respond in the very same way that Frank responded to his accusers at Nuremberg on 18 April 1946:

One has to take the diary as a whole. You can not go through 43 volumes and pick out single sentences and separate them from their context. I would like to say here that I do not want to argue or quibble about individual phrases. It was a wild and stormy period filled with terrible passions, and when a whole country is on fire and a life and death struggle is going on, such words may easily be used... Some of the words are terrible. I myself must admit that I was shocked at many of the words which I had used. (TMWC, XII, p. 20)

Hans Frank's sincerity cannot be doubted by anyone, I think. He at first pleaded "not guilty." Then, he suddenly began to believe in the worst inventions of Allied war propaganda about the gas chambers and the rest. He was utterly crushed by it. He accused himself of blindness. He thought that Hitler had shamefully deceived him. He sank into Judeo-Christian repentance. During the war, on the basis of rumors of atrocities at Belzec, he had immediately visited that camp. He had met General Globocnik (spelled "Globocznik," TMWC, Vol. XII, p. 18) and he had simply seen some Jews from the Reich and France digging an immense ditch as a protective enclosure; he spoke to some of them and his investigation ended there. At the trial, defense counsel Alfred Seidl ended by asking him, on 18 April 1946: "Did you ever participate in the annihilation of Jews?" Here is Hans Frank's reply. It is pathetic since it shows the man's good faith and the infamous character of the propaganda that had led him to make such a self-accusation:

I say "yes," and the reason why I say "yes" is because, having lived through the 5 months of this trial, and particularly after having heard the testimony of the witness Höss [three days before] my conscience does not allow me to throw the responsibility solely on these minor people... A thousand years will pass and still this guilt of Germany will not have been erased. (TMWC, Vol. XII, p. 13)

So it was that Frank was duped by the false testimony of Höss, one of the former commandants of Auschwitz, who had signed his written deposition (document NO-1210 of 14 March 1946; he later signed another deposition, document PS-3868 of 5 April 1946 -- on which he was interrogated at the IMT) without even knowing what it contained, since he had been beaten so much by his British guards. (Rudolf Höss, Kommandant in Auschwitz [Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1958], p. 145.)

## **David Irving is Not Certain**

On p. 52 of his presentation, David Irving reminds us that even in his private conversations, taken down by a stenographer, Hitler had expressed opinions about the Jews that prove he was completely unaware of a program for exterminating the Jews. And Irving said that those opinions were expressed in the presence of people like Martin Bormann, Reinhard Heydrich, or Heinrich Himmler, who themselves "certainly" knew that there was such a program and such an extermination going on. Irving said:

... he's [Hitler is] saying this to the people who are actually doing the dirty deed. Or who certainly know it's going on.

Here I would like to take the liberty of making an observation. When David Irving says "certainly," that is when he is least certain. This kind of adverb is often used to give weight to what one is not certain of being able to demonstrate. According to Hans Frank and the other defendants at the Nuremberg trial, Hitler was playing a double game. According to David Irving, it was Hitler's entourage that was playing the double game. In reality, the double game never existed. Neither Hitler nor the others were concealing a terrible secret: the one about the program for the extermination of the Jews. That program quite simply did not exist.

## **How Does David Irving Know That Gypsies Were Exterminated?**

On p. 56, Irving presents the physical liquidation of the Gypsies as an established fact. I do not know -- he doesn't tell us -- what evidence he has for that. Some Gypsies certainly were put into concentration camps, but there were still some troupes of Gypsies giving theatrical and circus performances in Germany even up to the very end. And above all I do not have the impression that the Gypsies are a race that has disappeared from continental Europe, or that by the end of the war they were a race on the way to extinction.

## **A Mistake About Majdanek**

On p. 718 of his *Hitler's War*, David Irving talks about "Majdanek near Treblinka". As a matter of fact, as the crow flies there is a distance of about 110 miles (180 kilometers) between Majdanek, which is located in the vicinity of Lublin, and Treblinka, which is located east of Warsaw. I mentioned Majdanek as one of the six places where exterminationists still persist in saying that there were gas chambers, although Martin Broszat of the Institut fuer Zeitgeschichte does not mention that camp in his famous letter published by *Die Zeit* on 19 August 1960, and Gerald Reitlinger does not at all seem to believe in the existence of gas chambers in the camp where, he writes, "Es war keine Todesfabrik in der Art von Auschwitz." ("There was no death factory of the kind at Auschwitz." Reitlinger, *Die Endloesung* [Berlin: Colloquium Verlag, 4th ed. 1961], p. 332).

## **Could David Irving Find Those Plans?**

On p. 49, Irving makes a remark in passing about Posen (Poznan). He says:

Poznan was the area where several of the major concentration camps which were involved were located.

If he means to say "involved in the extermination," he is in error. The official historians have gradually reduced to five or six the number of so-called extermination camps: Auschwitz (which is in the extreme south of Poland), then Treblinka, Sobibor, Majdanek, and Belzec (all located to the east toward the Russian border), and finally, the closest, Chelmno-on-the-Ner, located about 80 miles to the east of Poznan in the Konin district. The legend claims the presence at Chelmno of some "Stationierte Gaswagen," that is, some "gas-wagons [or-vans] parked there -- some immaterial and magic vans whose appearance the legend's scribes take great care not to show us, except through some children's drawings. I would be very grateful to an excellent investigator like Irving if he could find me a construction plan for one of those gas vans and, at the same time, a plan for Treblinka, a plan for Sobibor, and a plan for Belzec; I do mean a plan -- not some kind of "reconstruction from memory by a prosecution witness" in which, quite innocently, so as to make us believe in the existence of homicidal gas chambers in those camps, the designer has drawn in a small rectangle just as innocently labeled "gas chamber[s]." The general public is unaware that people have brought baseless suits against German staff personnel from those camps by making do with imaginary presentations of the locations of the crimes. Some "historians" like Gitta Sereny-Honeyman and Adalbert Rueckerl have had the nerve to publish works about those camps either without showing us any plan, or showing us plans "reconstructed according to the memory of a witness" for the prosecution. Germaine Tillion has done better than that for Ravensbrueck. She provides a plan but discreetly refrains from mentioning to us the location of the homicidal gas chamber. Those gas chambers are certainly magic.

The grand prize goes to the camp at Treblinka. In 1945-46, at the main Nuremberg trial, the official truth was held to be that the camp had had some "steam filled chambers," thirteen in number. With these, the Treblinka Jews were exterminated by means of water vapor. (See Document PS-3311, Charge No. 6 against Hans Frank, Governor General of Poland, TMWC, Vol. XXXII, pp. 154-58.) At a postwar time that I have not yet been able to determine, those steam chambers were (magically?) transformed into, and have officially remained, gas chambers.

### **It is Time for David Irving to Begin at the Beginning**

Most certainly, every historian -- precisely as every person -- has the right to change his views, to discard or modify in any way or enlarge upon them. The exercise of this right, which in some persons faced with some situations may also be called a duty, is in fact the foundation-stone of our revisionist history. David Irving has his right; it is up to him alone to determine whether he has also a duty -- to his many readers who recognize in him a master historian of World War II with a generally superb command of its sources, and who expect from him precisely what he has stated he is after: the "total truth"; to his peers in historiography -- some supportive, some indignant, some just perplexed -- who must, as they go about their own tasks, know exactly what they are confronting in him, so that they can compare it with their own lines of inquiry and conclusions, all toward the end of illuminating the problem; ultimately to the world and to history at large.

I will now present a final sentence from David Irving's presentation. On p. 51, after quoting the person who wrote to Eichmann on 16 July 1941, along with a comment from Hans Frank, he addresses himself to the revisionist historians. Using a word that I find very appropriate, he calls them the "dissident" historians. He says:

... it's sufficient to make me suspect that there was some kind of major crime going on at the initiative of the local criminals on the spot. This, I think, is the line that dissident historians should take.

Here is my response to David Irving:

"You are right to be suspicious. In historical investigation, suspicion is the beginning of wisdom. But what you consider to be in some sense a finish line, a line which must be maintained in order to continue the inquiry, I consider to be the starting line. Start with that suspicion if you wish, but do not stop there. Let that suspicion be a stimulus for an investigator like you. Do not hesitate to question it when you need to. You yourself frankly say that you 'haven't investigated that particular aspect of history.' You even say that you 'haven't got into that.' Let someone like me, who has gotten into that subject for many long years and who has conducted some investigations which few others have conducted, investigations as materialist in character as possible, let me tell you that the moment has come for a historian of your importance to get into the subject and to study it for yourself in your own fashion."

### **David Irving Should Expand His \$1,000 Offer**

I have some other things to say to David Irving:

"I congratulate you for the vigorous terms that you have used in opposing those who persecute free research. In this area I have, unfortunately, a certain advantage over you. If there is one lesson that I have drawn from my experiences in the struggle against that intolerance, it is that one must be inflexible. One must never fear to stand up for what one believes to be true, for the results to which his researches have inexorably pointed, in the face of such an enemy. One must provoke him, flush him out of hiding, and force him into battle. You already have easily provoked him by saying in public that you were ready to offer \$1,000 if someone could bring you wartime documentary proof, for example, that Hitler knew something about a program for the extermination of the Jews. I say this to you: EXPAND YOUR \$1,000 OFFER. Expand it beyond Hitler. Expand it to cover the other members of the Nazi hierarchy and administration, as high or as low as you want to go: Himmler, Göring, Goebbels, Bormann, Ribbentrop, Rosenberg, Frank, Heydrich, Kaltenbrunner, Eichmann, Heinrich Mueller, Richard Gluecks, and so on. Do this, and do not fear: You will not lose your \$1,000.

### **Raul Hilberg Himself Could Show the Way to David Irving**

"For a long time, Raul Hilberg, a sort of scholarly 'Pope' among the exterminationists, the only one for whom I have any sort of intellectual respect (what value is there to sad specimens like Eugen Kogon or Simon Wiesenthal, Adalbert Rueckerl or Martin Gray, Martin Broszat or Filip Mueller, Georges Wellers or Leon Poliakov?) has gone much further than you have. His confusion is not that of a pitiful cheat caught red-handed, a la Poliakov. His confusion resembles that of a man who has done an enormous amount of work

throughout much of his adult life, only to discover in the final analysis that he had failed to see at the start what a child is capable of seeing: before launching oneself into the realms of theories about events, one must take care to establish the physical realities of the events. What, concretely, took place? That is the first question which the historian must do his utmost to answer. Unless he answers that, as definitively as can possibly be done, then a house of cards -- or, to use a term that should be familiar to students of the exterminationist Gerald Reitlinger, a 'house built on sand' -- will result. The truth is not easy to find, to be sure, but the truth about actual, physical events is already something more limited, more precise, more accessible. And then, if many people still do not know what the truth is, they might at least know what a lie is. To try to flush the lie out of hiding helps the truth about the events to appear. Raul Hilberg has realized late in life that he did not begin at the beginning and that he was all along too cerebral, too theoretical -- and not enough the materialist. I advise you, David Irving, to read the long interview that Hilberg gave to Guy Sitbon, permanent correspondent in the United States for *Le Nouvel Observateur*, published in that paper's issue of 3-9 July 1982 (pp. 70-73, 75, 76). But perhaps it would be easier for you to read the article by George DeWan that appeared in the Long Island, New York, newspaper *Newsday* on 23 February 1983 (p. II-3) under the title 'The Holocaust in Perspective.' Here is a sampling of what Hilberg said about what he calls 'the destruction of the European Jews':

But what began in 1941 was a process of destruction not planned in advance, not organized centrally by any agency. There was no blueprint and there was no budget for destructive measures. They were taken step by step, one step at a time. Thus came about not so much a plan being carried out, but an incredible meeting of minds, a consensus -- mind-reading by a far-flung bureaucracy.

One of the Revisionist Conference participants, Dr. Robert John, was present at the presentation given by Hilberg in Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, on which the *Newsday* article was reporting. He confirmed to me that those statements were in fact made by Hilberg, and that he was surprised by them. For my part, those statements come as no surprise. Hilberg knows very well that if tomorrow you, David Irving, would study the cases of Himmler, Heydrich, Bormann, Frank, Globocnik, and so on, right on down to the case of First Sergeant Otto Moll (gardener in civilian life) who was in charge of the crematories at Birkenau, you would reach the same conclusions as you did about Hitler. Furthermore, Hilberg, restricted by the requirements of a thesis that he has maintained for more than twenty years and now in despair about his case and his cause, is obliged to look for an explanation of a magical kind: the inter-bureaucratic transmission ('mind-reading') of thought. ('Mind-reading.' This is exquisite. And could Hilberg not have paused to consider the associative consequences when, along with this term in the quote given above, he used the word 'incredible?') You, however, are freer than that. Your hypothesis -- which you presented at the Revisionist Conference -- has some similarities in form to Hilberg's. But Hilberg has already carried out all of the investigations that you could propose now to make. And we see the result of it: a quasi-metaphysical explanation of the alleged physical extermination of the Jews."

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31st December 1983

A Challenge to David Irving, *Journal of Historical Review*, 5, 2-4, Winter 1984, p. 289-305.

**CAUTION** : This text has been tampered with before publication by Willis Carto, without the author's approval. See the original where the missing passages have been re-instated. First French publication in *Ecrits révisionnistes*, vol. 1, 1999, p. 455-472, "Un défi à D. Irving".

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